

Maui Invitational presented by Novavax

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Lahaina, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

Colorado Buffs

Coach Tad Boyle

Andrej Jakimovski

Julian Hammond, III

Postgame Press Conference



said, you had a good win but a couple of tough losses and don't want to fly back across the Pacific after a performance like this, but how can you use this to try and move forward and use this as a learning exercise? Or would you rather have it out of sight, out of mind, because you've got to play them again twice?

JULIAN HAMMOND III: We played against three good teams. They pressure a lot. It's something that we haven't really seen as much at this high of a level. Iowa State does it on the ball and off the ball.

I think what we can take from these games are just how to handle pressure better, especially in games like this where they're not just making us turn it over, like they're scoring out of it, which makes it impossible to guard and get back because transition defense when they're getting steals it's much harder than off a miss or if we're set up, so I think we're just going to take back getting used to the pressure and the physicality and all that just so we can get that going for the rest of the games and into league play.

Q. Julian, you mentioned their pressure. Obviously it's something they've been known for, but this is the best transition offense they've ever had. When it starts to come when they poke a couple away and start taking them back the other way, did it start to feel like it's just happening every possession or so?

JULIAN HAMMOND III: Yeah, I felt like they were pressuring and they would get out one time and then we would have a bad possession, maybe a quick shot, a bad shot, and they'd get out on those, too.

So they'd just find a way to try and turn you over and then try and speed you up to get you to take a quicker shot.

I felt like we let too many of those possessions just compound. We still scored 71 points, but a lot of it was just us not being able to get back and stop them.

Q. Coach, they clearly were focused on taking Malone out of the game. What do you do to try to counter -- he's important; things happen -- you talked about running through him. What do you do to try to counter some of that?

Iowa State 99, Colorado 71

TAD BOYLE: I wasn't a math major but I can add. 51 points of their 99 came off of offensive rebounds where we don't box out or we get punked, beat, whatever you want to say, and then the other 37 come off -- there's 37 off turnovers and 14 off second-chance points. So 51 of their 99 that we have a direct result of causing or giving up or whatever you want to say.

With that being said, our half court defense wasn't very good, either. So you put the combination of the turnovers and not boxing out and not guarding as a team, and this is what you get against a good team. Iowa State is a hell of a program, hell of a team. They're well-coached. We're not. There you have it.

Q. Despite the turnovers like Tad just mentioned, at halftime it didn't seem like you were in much different of a position than you were against UConn, down I think it was 11 or so. Obviously you got things turned around against UConn. Why were you not able to get it turned around today?

ANDREJ JAKIMOVSKI: We just couldn't get stops. For us everything starts on the defensive end and they scored 99 points, so we just couldn't get stops. And like Coach said, we didn't take care of the ball, and those are two huge things for us, and we lost that game.

We've got to bounce back. It's a great experience for us. Three really good games. We got a taste of what Big 12 opponent is doing, and I think we're going to be ready.

Q. Julian, if I could ask you to recap the trip. As Tad



TAD BOYLE: Yeah, look, they were doubling him on the post. I told Elijah, as you go through this this season, people are going to figure out that you're pretty good down there, and there's certain teams that are going to say, okay, we're going to guard you one-on-one, and those are going to be the fun nights where you can go to work and do what you do, but there's other teams that are going to double you and take you out of the game. Now you have to become a distributor. Now there's two guys on you.

Again, I wasn't a math major, but that means we've got four offensive players against their three defensive players, and we did a poor job collectively as guards, as bigs, you name it, not just Elijah, of exposing them. Iowa State, they rotate well, they play extremely hard.

We had some really good offensive possessions where we moved the ball and we got one more and we got great looks. We just didn't have enough of them. We had too many where the ball gets poked, we turn it over. They're very good at getting their hands on balls in passing lanes. So we have to become better passers.

Again, there's two on Elijah. We're playing four on three. We've got to get the ball to one of our guys and make them pay for doubling. That's something he hasn't experienced up to this point, and great opportunity to learn.

But they trapped ball screens. Guess what, now the guard has two guys on him. He's got to get a ball moving. They're a much better passing team than we are. We've got to become better passers. Again, we did it at times. We just didn't do it consistently enough.

As a player, you should relish playing against these kind of teams because you're going to get open looks as long as you take care of it. But if you don't, it's an avalanche coming down on your head, and that's what happened to us.

Q. You have the really impressive win against UConn; with your decades of experience of coaching, you've seen sometimes it's like the team that you had 24 hours ago doesn't look like the team that you have today. Are you and your staff kind of prepared for the potential that this could be your season? Like on a given night you could pull off one of the biggest upsets in the Big 12, but on another night there's no guaranteeing you're going to be able to beat a lesser team on your home floor? Is this going to be that kind of season potentially?

TAD BOYLE: Well, I hope not. I hope we can get more consistent than what we've been here. You've seen we're the epitome of inconsistency in this tournament. Again,

outhouse, penthouse, outhouse. But we've got capable players. We've got enough talent.

We don't have the experience at this level that a lot of teams have. A lot of these teams have transfers that came from other Division I programs. Elijah Malone was playing NAIA basketball last year. Trevor Baskin was playing Division II basketball last year. We've got two freshmen that are playing that have no experience.

Now, the rest of our guys have limited experience, Bangot Dak, Assane Diop. Julian and Andrej are probably our two most experienced players, but we don't have a roster full of them like some of these other teams. With that being said, early, and it's still early, we're still in November, we're going to have some growing pains. We're going to have some inconsistencies. I knew that before the season.

It doesn't make it any easier when you're going through it, but we're going to have to -- but hopefully by January and certainly February and March, we can be more consistent than what we've been here because we have in my opinion enough talent. But so does Iowa State. So does every other team in the Big 12.

That's what makes coming to these games, covering these games, playing in these games so much fun. At least when you play to your potential. Today is no fun, but it's a great opportunity for our players. It's a learning experience.

I told myself before the season started, I have to have patience with this group. It's not in my nature. But that's kind of where we are right now.

Q. You mentioned the pressure. Obviously they had 22 fast break points. That's been a hallmark under TJ. They always are great at forcing turnovers. This is easily the best tempo offense and transition offense they've ever had. What allowed them to unlock that today against you guys?

TAD BOYLE: Well, getting their hands on balls, poking balls. I mean, you can give credit to their defense or you can just say our offense wasn't good enough. You guys watched the game. You figure it out. I know our offense wasn't good enough consistently, and we were not strong with the ball.

When we were, when we were strong with the ball and we went strong cuts, good things happened for us. We got good looks. We made some baskets.

Now, we didn't finish like we're capable of finishing. We missed a wide open dunk, we missed two or three at the

rim. But I told our team, there are going to be nights like that offensively, especially in the league we play in. You're going to go up against some of the best defenses in the country. Scoring is going to be hard on some nights, especially on the road. Guess what, you've got to rely on the other end, your defense, your ball security. As long as you've got ball security and you're guarding, you can stay in games.

We had that against UConn. We did not have that against Michigan State, and we certainly didn't have it today. It's not a hard problem to figure out. Now, is it a hard problem to fix? We'll find out. I'm going to do my best as a coach.

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